

Demanding Total Ban on LIquor in Karnataka

"When a patient is in critical condition, he/she is first put in ICU and treated, only later is a discussion done on what is best way forward. Today the women strongly feel that the society and their family lives are in critical condition and needs some urgent action (like in ICU - so ban liquor) and later we can all take some time to find the best way forward" - a statement by Basamma of Linsugur taluk, Raichur district, Karnataka.

Madhya Nisheda Andolan - Karnataka has started a 71 day Satyagraha from February 20th (World Social Justice Day) up to May 1st (Labour day) to demand total prohibition in Karnataka and also to put pressure on political parties that they need to meet women's group like they meet caste and farmers groups before elections, to find out about the demands of 50% of the population.

The 24 hours Satyagraha is going on in Raichur, Gandhi Statue - Stadium compound. The andolan has also made a people's manifesto which includes most of the issues we all fight for like wages, social security, health and education rights, scientific price for farmers produce, support to handmade products, Land and housing rights, 50% political reservation to women, implement recommendations of Nirbhaya committee report, land to landless and housing land for all and so on.

Everyday around 200 women from around 4-5 villages participate in the Satyagarha. There are also discussions on social and political issues along with understanding of labour unions, farmer's co-operatives, people's bank and women's federating themselves. Every day evening apart from 5 from each village, all others go back. The 5 women sit down and make a list of how to pressurize the political parties when they come to their village (not to get lured by money or liquor) and also make a list of village problems, which the Sangathan has to take up in future. They also plan how if the government does

not ban liquor they need to take other actions in their respective villages to stop this menace.

The andolan is just not in Raichur; simultaneously women are taking up struggles in 8-10 districts of Karnataka, like women are doing a 15 day padyatra in Belgaum and so on. This has been continuing for last 2 years and women have raised these issues in front of all major political parties and have been getting lot of support from religious leaders, press and other friends.

We request you all to come and participate in this Satyagraha whenever its convenient for you. The women have decided and planned for the 71 days but they need publicity (and so if activists, intellectuals, others) and need friends to either come to Raichur or in any other way possible show solidarity with the movement as it will boost up confidence of the Satyagrahis. We also request you to write to friends who could support this Satyagraha.

In Solidarity,
Abhay
Grakoos, Karnataka